A Descriptive Study of Students' Ability in Pronouncing Word Stress in Monophthongs

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to know the students' ability in pronouncing monophthong of the X PPLG 1 at SMKN 1 Banyuwangi. The researcher used descriptive quantitative method. This research used test and record to collect the data. The data was obtained by analyzing the students' ability in pronouncing word stress (primary and secondary stress) in monophtongs. The researcher used twelve (12) monophthongs in this research, namely [iː], [I], [e], [æ], [aː], [ɒ], [ɔː], [ʊ], [uː], [ʌ], [ɜː], and [ə]. There were 31 students as the respondent in this research. The data processing method was divided into four stages namely, data collection, data processing, data analysis, and data description. Based on the research findings, the researcher found the word that the results of this research indicated the students' ability in pronouncing primary stress were 84% and secondary stress were 82%. The classification of the students' ability in pronouncing both primary and secondary stress were categorized as "very good".

Keywords: *Student's Ability; Pronouncing; Monophthong; Word Stress*

A. Introduction

Speaking has an important social role in human life because speaking is a very essential face-to-face communication medium. Fulcher (2003) stated that speaking is the ability to produce and understand spoken language to communicate with others (Darmawan et al., 2023). It related to the activities that someone does to convey information, messages, and ideas to other orally. In addition, speaking is an important part of the language learning process because if a person does not have the ability to communicate orally properly, it can prevent a person from succeeding in school or society. Therefore, students must be able to communicate well in English. Speaking is an important skill that is used to interact verbally with each other (Savigno in Sihombing, 2014). Students can communicate in English with other people if they can speak fluently without stammering, convey their thoughts and ideas in a clear and structured manner, avoid using sentences that are difficult to be understood by others in conveying information, and pronounce English word clearly and correctly through

learning speaking, students are expected to be able to convey their opinions or feelings well. It means that speaking has an important role in life so that everyone should learn to speak clearly and accurately to avoid misunderstanding in communication.

Fitriani et.al (2015) stated that there are factors that affect students' difficulties in learning speaking, such as a lack of self-confidence because they are afraid or embarrassed to make mistakes when expressing sentences, they are often confused by the existing rules, such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Maji et al., 2022). Students are often afraid to speak because of their limited vocabulary, confused in forming sentences, and afraid of making pronunciation mistakes, this makes them not confident in producing sentences and makes them passive and afraid to learning speaking. Furthermore, the students usually can understand what the others say, but they cannot communicate it. This may be due to lack of practice, low motivation, less communication competence and also lack of confidence. Speaking practice is very important in learning English pronunciation. If students often practice speaking English pronunciation, it can make the spoken words easy to understand (Yoshida, 2013). It can be seen that pronunciation is an important element in a communication.

Pronunciation is a component of spoken language which is the way a language is spoken or the way someone pronouncing the words of a language (Cook in Gilakjani, 2016). Pronunciation is a way of pronouncing a vocabulary in English. This is related to using the correct voice, intonation, stress, and rhythm. Stress refers to the emphasis placed on certain syllables, morphemes, or words in a sentence (Fasold, 2015). This emphasis can influence the meaning or interpretation of an expression. There are two types of stress in English, namely sentence stress and word stress (Yoshida, 2013). Word stress is the emphasis or special stress given to certain syllables in a word. In a linguistic context, word stress plays an important role in providing meaning and regulating intonation in speaking. Hassan (2012) stated that there are two types of stress namely primary stress or strong stress and secondary stress or weak stress (Josias, 2021). Primary stress is the main emphasis or strongest stress given to a particular syllable in a word or phrase. While secondary stress is additional stress that is weaker than the primary stress in a word or phrase. In English, giving a word stress can affect

the meaning of a word or sentence. Changes in syllable stress can produce differences in meaning.

Therefore, mastering stress is very important for students because the correct use of stress can produce the right sound which aimed at making meaning out of a sentence. Sometimes someone is judged by the way they speak. Therefore, everyone must have good pronunciation skills to avoid mispronunciations and misunderstandings in communication. Pronunciation can be learned in various ways, such as by practicing regularly, using a phonetic dictionary, and learned by imitating the sounds spoken by native speakers repeatedly so that inaccurate pronunciation can be corrected. Therefore, the students must learn pronunciation intensively to improve their ability to pronounce words correctly and make it easier for others to understand what they say. In this case, the teacher's role is very important for students to help them to distinguish similar sounds, such as the words "ant and aunt" which are often mispronounced by the students. Therefore, they must be able to master how to pronounce vowels and consonants well. Hudson (2013) stated that there are three types of vowel sounds in English, namely monophthongs and diphthongs (Wangi & Lestari, 2020). Monophthong is a single vowel sound or pure vowel sound that is pronounced without significant changes in its articulation during pronunciation. This means that when someone pronouncing a monophthong, the mouth will remain in a relatively constant position throughout the pronunciation of the vowel, with no movement or change in the sound. Collins & Mees (2003) stated that here are twelve monophthongs in English, they are [iː], [I], [e], [æ], [aː], [ɒ], [ɔː], [ʊ], [uː], [ʌ], [ɜː], [ə] (Haque & Sharfuddin, 2022). The examples of monophthongs are /e/ in "bed," /æ/ in "fat," /ɒ/ in "dog," and /ʊ/ in "cook." In the case of each monophthongs, the mouth remains in a relatively constant position during the pronunciation of that vowel without significant changes in the sound.

From the explanation above, it can be seen that pronunciation is a way to pronounce words or phrases in certain languages. This involves using sound, intonation, stress, and rhythm to produce the right sounds used to make meaning (Yates in Gilakjani, 2016). Each language has a unique pronunciation system, which can affect understanding and communication between speakers of different languages. Proper pronunciation in language really needs to be considered to avoid misunderstandings in

communication because if someone mispronounce a word it can change the meaning of the sentence.

B. Research Method

This research used a descriptive quantitative as a research design. A descriptive quantitative is a research method carried out by collecting and analyzing data to describe or explain phenomena or variables in the form of numbers or numerical data (Sugiyono, 2017). This approach is based on the use of scientific methods that are objective, measurable, and based on logic and statistics. The main purpose of descriptive quantitative research is to measure, describe, identify, or explain the characteristics, properties, or relationships between variables in a population or sample. The respondents in this research were the students of class X PPLG (*Pengembangan Perangkat Lunak dan Gim*) 1 at SMKN 1 Banyuwangi. There were 31 students (16 males and 15 females). The researcher used a purposive sampling technique in this research. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique that fall into category of non-probability sampling, which is a technique where sampling is carried out deliberately and with a specific purpose (Sugiyono, 2017).

The researcher gave the test to the students to determine their ability in pronouncing monophthongs. In the data collection process, the researcher provides the list of words related to the scope of the PPLG (*Pengembangan Perangkat Lunak dan Gim*) Department to the respondents in order to obtain information regarding students' ability in pronouncing monophthongs. The researcher conducted this research to find the students' ability in pronouncing word stress (primary and secondary stress) in monophthongs. The data processing was divided into four stages namely, data collection, data processing, data analysis, and data description in order to determine the students' ability in pronouncing monophthong. The following is the pronunciation assessment scale. Students' pronunciation ability will be classified in the table below:

Table 1. The Rubric of Pronunciation Test

Aspect	Score				
Pronunciation	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Individual sounds of word stress	Attempts to produce sounds of the language but cannot be intelligible.	Produces some sounds of the language but is often difficult to understand.	Sometimes intelligible.	Generally intelligible although some sounds may be unclear.	Shows a great degree of intelligibility. Clear sounds both on individual and word level.

(Source: the table is adapted by Synergy & Xintaras, 2021)

There are twelve (12) monophthongs used in this research, they are [iː], [I], [e], [æ], [aː], [ɒ], [ɔː], [ʊ], [uː], [ʌ], [ɜː], [ə]. The researcher used two words of monophthong (one word for primary stress and one word for secondary stress), so the total words tested were 24 words. The assessments of the pronunciation test were taken based on the rubric with the highest point was 5 and the lowest point was 1 (table 1). The maximum score for each word stress is 60 (12 words X 5). After collecting the data, the students' scores is calculated by using the formula below:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \text{ X } 100\%$$

Where:

P   = The students' percentage

F   = Student's score

N   = Maximum score

(Sudijono, 2009)

The mean score is calculated by using the formula:

$$X = \frac{\Sigma X}{N}$$

Where:

X   = The mean score

ƐX   = The total sum of all score

N   = The total respondent

(Gay et al., 2012)

After calculating the students' score, the result was classified in the following table:

Table 2. The Category of Students' Ability

Interval Percentage(%)	Category
90– 100	Excellent
70 – 89	Very Good
50 – 69	Good
20 – 49	Poor
0 – 19	Very Poor

(Source: Synergy & Xintaras, 2021)

C. Research Finding and Discussion

The researcher focused on assessing word stress which is divided into two types and they are primary and secondary stress. To make it easier to convey the findings, the researcher used transcripts of students' pronunciation monophthongs in primary and secondary stress. The result of students' ability in pronouncing primary and secondary stress are showed in these following tables.

Table 3. The Score of the Students' Ability in Pronouncing Primary Stress

Number of Students	Total Point	Score(%)
1	58	97
2	53	88
3	52	87
4	53	88
5	51	85
6	54	90
7	42	70
8	52	87
9	48	80
10	52	87
11	48	80
12	36	60
13	51	85
14	50	83
15	46	77
16	48	80
17	52	87
18	53	88
19	52	87
20	53	88
21	60	100

22	46	77
23	51	85
24	48	80
25	54	90
26	47	78
27	54	90
28	51	85
29	53	88
30	55	92
31	38	63
Total		2602
Mean Score		84

Based on the table above, the result showed that the highest score of the students in pronouncing primary stress was 100%, and the lowest score was 60%. Then, the mean score was 84%.

Table 4. The Score of the Students' Ability in Pronouncing Secondary Stress

Number of Students	Total Point	Score (%)
1	55	92
2	55	92
3	53	88
4	54	90
5	41	68
6	50	83
7	30	50
8	53	88
9	48	80
10	46	77
11	45	75
12	49	82
13	57	95
14	52	87
15	50	83
16	35	58
17	54	90
18	54	90
19	55	92
20	56	93
21	60	100
22	44	73
23	48	80
24	41	68
25	51	85

26	41	68
27	54	90
28	55	92
29	56	93
30	54	90
31	32	53
Total		2547
Mean Score		82

The highest score of the students in pronouncing secondary stress was 100%, the lowest score was 50%, and the mean score was 82%.

It can be concluded that the mean score of primary stress was 84% and secondary stress was 82%. Based on the category (table 2), the interval percentage for those mean scores (84% and 82%) is categorized as "very good".

Picture 1. The Category of the Word Stress Score

Interval Percentage(%)	Category
90– 100	Excellent
70 – 89	Very Good
50 – 69	Good
20 – 49	Poor
0 – 19	Very Poor

So it is indicated that the students' abilities in pronouncing both primary and secondary stress were same, both are in "very good" category. The majority of the students get a score above 70, this means that their pronunciation ability can be understood well. This is supported by the expert who say that someone is considered very good in pronunciation ability if they are able to pronounce words clearly, correctly and can be understood by the listener (Gimson in Dahlan, 2022).

D. Conclusion

Based on finding above, it could be indicated that the students' ability in pronouncing primary and secondary stress of the X PPLG 1 is in the "very good" category. The researcher concluded that the majority of the students were able to pronounce the words correctly and clearly, this was because they were familiar with the words that being tested, but some of them could not pronounce the words correctly because of due to lack of practice and did not confident to pronounce the words in English.

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